

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 ACDA-07 NEA-10 EA-07 EB-07

COME-00 TRSE-00 FEAE-00 INT-05 OES-07 /116 W

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R 011106Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 442

INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

STATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PDIP, ECON, MPOL, SE, TZ, UR, UK

SUBJECT: SEYCHELLES WEEKLY REVIEW - JULY 1

REF: VICTORIA 363

SUMMARY: THIS SECOND WEEKLY SUBMISSION ON MISCELLANEOUS DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDES REPORTS ON ARRIVAL OF RESIDENT SOVIET AMBASSADOR, SIGNING OF OIL EXPLORATION AGREEMENT, IMPOSITION OF TEMPORARY PRICE CONTROLS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SECURITY FORCES. END SUMMARY.

1. IN JUNE 28 MEETING, MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BERLOUIS TOLD CHARGE THAT CONTINGENT OF TANZANIAN MILITARY ADVISORS NOW NUMBERED "FEWER THAN TWENTY." BERLOUIS SAID HE HAD BECOME WELL ACQUAINTED WITH MANY OF TANZANIANS PRESENTLY IN SEYCHELLES WHEN HE WAS PRESIDENT RENE'S PARTY REPRESENTATIVE IN DAR ES SALAAM. HE DUCKED QUESTION ABOUT PLANNED SIZE OF NEW ARMY BUT HIS REMARKS SUGGESTED IT MAY EQUAL OR EXCEED 130-MAN PARAMILITARY SPECIAL FORCE
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POLICE UNIT.

2. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER PUGH BRIEFED ME ON HIS JUNE 24 MEETING WITH RENE ON FUTURE PRIORITIES FOR BRITISH AID. RENE REQUESTED THAT IMMEDIATE ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO IMPROVEMENT OF POLICE STATIONS AND LIVING QUARTERS WHICH HAD BEEN LOW PRIORITY ITEM ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR 1980-81. HE ALSO REQUESTED NEW

POLICE ADVISORS IN ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING. PUGH SAID RENE ALSO TOLD HIM RECENT ARMS DELIVERIES INCLUDED MACHINE GUNS, MORTARS, GROUND TO AIR MISSILES, AND SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT. RENE TOLD PUGH OTHER SHIPMENTS OF WEAPONS WERE EXPECTED AND THAT HIS FORCES WERE NOW IN POSITION TO REPULSE ANY ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT.

3. SOVIET AMBASSADOR ALEXANDRE STARTSEV ARRIVED IN SEYCHELLES JUNE 26 AND PRESENTED CREDENTIALS JUNE 27. IN HIS REMARKS, PRESIDENT RENE IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID SEYCHELLES SUPPORTS INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE CONCEPT AND DECLARED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED TO COOPERATE WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN PURSUING COMMON GOALS. STARTSEV AND OTHER MEMBERS OF RESIDENT SOVIET MISSION ARE STAYING AT LOCAL HOTELS PENDING DECISION ON WHETHER TO LEASE OFFICE ACCOMMODATIONS AND HOUSING OR CONSTRUCT COMPOUND. ACCORDING COUNSELLOR BORIS SAMSONOV, SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY BUILD. ACCORDING BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION, SEVEN SOVIET DIPLOMATS ARE NOW IN SEYCHELLES.

4. FIRST ISSUE OF 16 PAGE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, "WEEKEND LIFE," APPEARED JUNE 25. NEWSPAPER IS PUBLISHED BY BERNARD VERLAQUE, SEYCHELLOIS WHO HAS TEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS JOURNALIST IN U.K. MOST OF ISSUE WAS DEVOTED TO STRAIGHT FORWARD PHOTO-ESSAY COVERAGE OF JUNE 5 COUP D'ETAT. EDITORIAL MADE STRONG PITCH FOR NEED FOR TRULY INDEPENDENT, UNCENSORED NEWS SOURCE. INITIAL RUN OF 3,500 WAS REPORTEDLY SOLD OUT.
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5. PROJECT MONEX LOCKHEED ELECTRA AIRCRAFT HAD UNEVENTFUL JUNE 23-27 VISIT. VISIT WAS APPARENTLY NOT WELL COORDINATED WITHIN SEYCHELLES GOVERNMENT SINCE 2 HOURS BEFORE SCHEDULED ARRIVAL, EMBASSY RECEIVED CALLS FROM JITTERY OFFICIALS WHO HAD NOT BEEN INFORMED AND WANTED DETAILS.

6. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ANNOUNCED FURTHER RELAXATION IN CURFEW HOURS (NOW IN EFFECT 0200-0500) AND INCREASE IN PERIODS WHEN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES CAN BE SERVED.

7. INTERNATIONAL OIL CONSORTIUM (INCLUDING AMOCO AS 20 PER CENT PARTICIPANT) SIGNED EXPLORATION AGREEMENT WITH SEYCHELLES GOVERNMENT JUNE 30 AS SCHEDULED. ACCORDING AMOCO REP QUOYESER, DETAILED SEISMIC STUDIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT OVER NEXT 2 YEARS IN LARGE OFF-SHORE AREA ABOUT 80 MILES SOUTH OF MAHE. IF SURVEY WARRANTS, COMPANIES HAVE RIGHT TO DRILL. PRESIDENT RENE HAD NEGOTIATED AGREEMENT LAST SPRING AS PRIME MINISTER BI QUOYESER PRIVATELY DESCRIBED CHANCES OF DISCOVERY AS EXTREMELY REMOTE. MEANWHILE SEYCHELLES RECEIVED SIGNATURE BONUSES REPORTEDLY TALLING ABOUT DOLS. 300,000.

8. IN MOVE TO PREVENT SHOPKEEPERS FROM RAISING PRICES, GOVERNMENT

ON JUNE 27 ANNOUNCED IMPOSITION OF TEMPORARY ACROSS-THE-BOARD PRICE CONTROLS ON ALL GOODS. PRICE CONTROL EDICT COINCIDED WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF SALARY INCREASES AVERAGING 15 PERCENT FOR GOVERNMENT WORKERS RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 1977. WAGE INCREASE WERE IN WORKS BEFORE JUNE 5 COUP. (CURRENT INFLATION RATE IS 17.8 PER CENT).

9. GOVERNMENT GAVE MAJOR PUBLICITY TO MAURITIAN RECOGNITION OF NEW GOVERNMENT.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977VICTOR00380
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770235-1123
Format: TEL
From: VICTORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 VICTORIA 363
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1978233
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEYCHELLES WEEKLY REVIEW - JULY 1
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PDIP, ECON, MPOL, SE, TZ, UR, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/21e1f071-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009